

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) An insert for use in a beverage preparation machine of a type comprising a brew head suitable for receiving a rigid or semi-rigid cartridge, the brew head comprising an upwardly directed inlet for supplying water to the brew head and a downwardly directed outlet for outflow of beverage produced by the machine, the insert comprising an upper part, a lower part and sealing means, the upper and lower parts being moveable between an open configuration in which a quantity of beverage ingredients may be loaded into the insert and a closed configuration in which the upper and lower parts are sealed together by the sealing means to define therebetween a brewing volume containing, in use, the quantity of beverage ingredients, the lower part comprising an inlet and an outlet arranged to communicate respectively with the inlet and outlet of the brew head of the beverage preparation machine when the insert is inserted into the machine such that, in use, water from the inlet of the brew head passes upwardly through the inlet of the insert into the brewing volume and such that beverage produced from the water and the quantity of beverage ingredients passes downwardly through the outlet of the insert to flow out of the outlet of the brew head.

2. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 1 wherein the quantity of beverage ingredients loaded in use into the insert are loose.

3. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 2 wherein the insert comprises filtering means between the brewing volume and the outlet of the insert.

4. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 1 wherein the quantity of beverage ingredients loaded in use into the insert are contained in a container comprising filtering means.

5. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 4 wherein the container is flexible.

6. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 5 wherein the container is formed at least in part from a filter paper or filtering membrane.

7. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 6, wherein the container is a filter bag.

8. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 4 wherein the container is a rigid or semi-rigid cartridge.

9. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 8 wherein the cartridge is any of semi-spherical, cylindrical, round or square in shape.

10. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 9, wherein the sealing means is located on or in the upper part of the insert.

11. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 10, wherein the sealing means is located on or in the lower part of the insert.

12. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in any preceding claim 11, wherein the sealing means comprises a ring seal for sealing around a periphery of the brewing volume.

13. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 12 wherein the sealing means comprises an O-ring.

14. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 13, wherein the sealing means is formed from an elastomeric material.

15. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 14, wherein the upper part and lower part are disconnected from one another.

16. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 15 wherein the upper part and lower part comprise co-operating formations to permit snap-fitting together of the upper part and lower part.

17. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 15 wherein the upper part and lower part are joined by a hinge allowing the upper and lower parts to move between the open and closed configurations.

18. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 17, wherein the upper part of the insert is rigid or semi-rigid such that pressure applied, in use, to the upper part of the insert by a closure mechanism of the beverage preparation machine on closing of said closure mechanism squeezes the upper and lower parts of the insert together with sufficient force for the sealing means to seal together the upper and lower parts.

19. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 18, wherein the upper part of the insert is rigid or semi-rigid such that pressure applied, in use, to the upper part of the insert by a closure mechanism of the beverage preparation machine on closing of said closure mechanism seals the lower part of the insert against the inlet of the brew head of the beverage preparation machine.

20. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in any preceding claim 19, wherein the upper part is in the form of a domed shell.

21. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 20, wherein the lower part of the insert is formed as one piece.

22. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 20, wherein the lower part of the insert is formed from more than one piece.

23. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 22, wherein the insert is disc-shaped.

24. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 23, formed from plastic.

25. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 24, wherein the inlet and outlet of the insert are coplanar.

26. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 25, further comprising an aperture for receiving on insertion of the insert in the beverage machine a window of a bar code reader or RFID reader of said machine.

27. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 26 wherein the aperture is coplanar with the inlet and outlet of the insert.

28. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 27, wherein the inlet of the insert is located at or near a periphery of the lower part and the outlet of the insert is located at a centre of the lower part.

29. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 28, wherein, in use, flow through the insert is from the inlet to the outlet.

30. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 29 wherein, in use, flow through the insert is generally in an inward direction from the inlet to the outlet.

31. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 30, further comprising rotatable means for rotatably attaching the insert to the beverage preparation machine.

32. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 31 wherein the rotatable means allows the insert to be rotated on closure of a closure mechanism of the beverage preparation machine into a horizontal orientation such that the lower part is sealed against the inlet of the brew head.

33. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 32 wherein the rotatable means comprises one or more legs which are attachable to, and rotatable about, one or more pivot points of the brew head.

34. (Previously Presented) An insert as claimed in claim 33, further comprising coding means for controlling operation of said beverage preparation machine.

35. (Original) An insert as claimed in claim 34 wherein the coding means comprises a bar code or radio frequency identification device (RFID).

36. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system comprising a beverage preparation machine and an insert for use in said machine, said insert comprising an upper part, a lower part and sealing means, the upper and lower parts being moveable between an open configuration in which a quantity of beverage ingredients may be loaded into the insert and a closed configuration in which the upper and lower parts are sealed together by the sealing means to define therebetween a brewing volume containing, in use, the quantity of beverage ingredients, the lower part passes upwardly through the inlet of the insert into the brewing volume and such that beverage produced from the water and the quantity of beverage ingredients passes downwardly through the outlet of the insert.

37. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 36 wherein the beverage preparation machine comprises a brew head suitable for receiving a rigid or semi-rigid cartridge, the brew head comprising an upwardly directed inlet for supplying water to the brew head and a downwardly directed outlet for outflow of beverage produced by the machine.

38. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 37 wherein the inlet of the brew head is located at or near a periphery of the brew head and the outlet of the brew head is located at a centre of the brew head.

39. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 38 wherein, on insertion of the insert into the brew head, the inlet and outlet of the insert lie on top of the upwardly directed inlet and downwardly directed outlet orifices of the brew head.

40. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 39, wherein the brew head of the beverage preparation machine comprises a closure mechanism moveable between an open configuration in which the insert can be inserted into the brew head and a closed configuration in which the insert is squeezed together by the closure mechanism with sufficient force for the sealing means of the insert to seal together the upper and lower parts of the insert.

41. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 40, wherein the brew head of the beverage preparation machine comprises a closure mechanism moveable between an open configuration in which the insert can be inserted into the brew head and a closed configuration in which the lower part of the insert is sealed against the inlet of the brew head of the beverage preparation machine.

42. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 41, wherein the brew head comprises a fixed lower part and a rotatable upper part, the fixed lower part comprising the brew head inlet and outlet, the upper part being rotatable from an open position in which the insert can be inserted into the brew head and a closed position in which the insert is engaged between the fixed lower part and the rotatable upper part.

43. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 42 wherein the insert is a rotatable attachment to the brew head such that rotation of the upper part of the brew head from the open to the closed position rotates the insert into contact with the fixed lower part.

44. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 42 wherein the insert is locatable directly onto the fixed lower part of the brew head when the upper part of the brew head is in the open position.

45. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 44, wherein the beverage preparation machine comprises a reader for detecting a bar code or radio frequency identification device (RFID) located on the insert.

46. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 45, further comprising a quantity of beverage ingredients.

47. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 46 wherein the quantity of beverage ingredients is contained in a container comprising filtering means.

48. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 47 wherein the beverage ingredients are selected from the group consisting of roast and ground coffee, leaf tea, powdered coffee, powdered tea, creamer, cappuccino mix, chocolate and liquid chocolate, coffee, tea and milk.

49. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 48 wherein the container is flexible.

50. (Withdrawn) A beverage preparation system as claimed in claim 49 wherein the container is formed at least in part from a filter paper or filtering membrane.

51. (Withdrawn) A method of dispensing a beverage using a comprising the steps of:

- providing a beverage preparation machine comprising a brew head suitable for receiving a rigid or semi-rigid cartridge, the brew head comprising an upwardly directed inlet for supplying water to the brew head and a downwardly directed outlet for outflow of beverage produced by the machine;
- opening a closure mechanism of the beverage preparation machine;
- inserting an insert containing a quantity of beverage ingredients into the brew head, the insert comprising an upper part, a lower part and sealing means, the upper and lower parts being moveable between an open configuration in which a quantity of beverage ingredients may be loaded into the insert and a closed configuration in which the upper and lower parts are sealed together by the sealing means to define therebetween a brewing volume;
- closing the closure mechanism to squeeze the insert with sufficient force such that to seal together the upper and lower parts of the insert;
- operating the beverage preparation machine to pass water upwardly from the inlet of the brew head through the inlet of the insert into the brew volume of the insert; and
- dispensing a the beverage formed in the brew volume from the water and the beverage ingredients downwardly through the outlet of the insert and the outlet of the brew head.